



# Rock Talk

The Official Newsletter of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds

## Aquamarine

Aquamarine is a beautiful gemstone and a variety of the mineral beryl. It is highly prized for its stunning blue to greenish-blue color, reminiscent of the clear waters of the sea, which gives it its name "aquamarine" (aqua meaning water and marine meaning sea). Aquamarine is a popular gemstone used in jewelry and is also the birthstone for the month of March.

Aquamarine is a variety of beryl, composed of beryllium aluminum silicate with the chemical formula  $\text{Be}_3\text{Al}_2\text{Si}_6\text{O}_{18}$ . It belongs to the same mineral family as emerald, morganite, and heliodor.

Aquamarine is known for its blue to greenish-blue hues, which can vary in intensity from pale to vibrant. The color is due to trace amounts of iron present in the crystal structure. The gemstone can be transparent to translucent, with higher-quality stones exhibiting greater transparency.

Aquamarine crystallizes in the hexagonal crystal system. It typically forms prismatic crystals with a hexagonal cross-section, which can vary in size from small to large.



### This Month's Roundup of Stories

- [Aquamarine](#)
- [Secretary's Report](#)
- [Paraiba Tourmaline](#)
- [Danger Rocks](#)
- [William Holland Scholarships](#)
- [Galaxyite](#)
- [Bench Tips](#)

March's Birthstone - Aquamarine

On the Mohs scale of mineral hardness, aquamarine has a hardness rating of 7.5 to 8. This makes it a relatively durable gemstone, suitable for everyday wear.

Aquamarine is found in various locations around the world. Notable sources include Brazil, Madagascar, Nigeria, Zambia, Pakistan, and Russia, among others. The quality and color of aquamarine can vary depending on the source.

Aquamarine is relatively durable, but it can still be susceptible to scratches and damage from rough handling or sharp blows. To care for your aquamarine jewelry, it is advisable to store it separately from other gemstones to prevent scratches.

Read the entire article at [GeologyScience.com](https://www.geology.com)



Clubhouse Address:  
3357 Susan Dr.  
Spring Hill, FL 34606

# Secretary's Report

*Minutes and More from Club Secretary - Melodye Steverson*

*Withlacoochee Rockhounds Monthly Meeting - Minutes Date 2/14/2024*

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Michael Steverson at 7:05pm.

We all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

There were no new members to recognize.

There was 1 guest in attendance: Gina Riggs.

Ralph Barber made a motion to accept the minutes of our January meeting as printed in the newsletter, Diane Hensley seconded. Passed by all members.

Treasurer Janet Wheeler gave the Treasurer's report. Carla Howell made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report subject to audit. Seconded by Roberta Oldread. Approved by all.

VP Steverson announced that the night's program will feature the mining of Amethyst in America.

He recognized Silversmithing Class teacher Janice Wojcik, who said the past weeks class had been good. The students had produced some beautiful silver pendants. She continued, that there will be no class in March as she will be undergoing some extensive dental work. The class in April will be a Beginner Class, however she will accept February's students into that class as well. Sign-up will be at the March meeting.

Ms Wojcik also stated that she will be presenting the March program which will be "Danger - Rocks Ahead!". This will point out the danger of working with certain harmful and toxic rocks.

VP Steverson stated that the April meeting program will be a club favorite - Rock Rummage Sale. Bring any rocks, or rock-related items you want to sell or trade with members.

He then shared the information regarding a Gem Show being put on by the Central Florida Mineral & Gem Society in Sanford, FL on April 27 - 28. Please see this newsletter for details.

Roberta Oldread made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Carla Howell seconded, passed by all. Meeting was adjourned at 7:20pm.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson.*

*Withlacoochee Rockhounds Board of Directors Meeting Minutes*

*Date 2/21/2024*

Attending Board members; Anthony Maffatone, Michael Steverson, Melodye Steverson, Janet Wheeler, Ralph Barber, Roger Wheeler, Leslie Newberry, Hunter Mellring, and James Roush.

The Board meeting started at 6:45pm and was held via the Internet on Zoom. President Maffatone joined us from Italy.

Secretary Steverson brought up the subject of our club's scholarship to the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts, now known as the William Holland Retreat. After discussion, a decision was made to continue with two scholarship awards this year. An announcement will be placed in the newsletter and applications will be accepted beginning in March.

Treasurer Wheeler inquired about the Endowment Fund for the USF Geology Department. After discussion and bringing new Board members up to speed, it was decided to send them \$500 this year.

Board member Hunter Mellring brought up the club's Facebook page and suggested we could put videos on TikTok to bring in new members and show people what we do. He said we could also do live streams to garner interest. The Board decided there should be a list of guidelines and rules regarding our social media presence. This will be addressed at the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 7:19pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson*

# Paraiba Tourmaline

Paraiba Tourmaline is a gemstone renowned for its vivid and mesmerizing colors, prized by gem enthusiasts and collectors alike.

This gemstone derives its name from the Brazilian state of Paraíba, where it was first discovered in the late 1980s. It belongs to the tourmaline family, a group of minerals known for their remarkable range of colors.

Paraiba Tourmaline is a variety of tourmaline characterized by its striking hues of blue, green, or violet. What sets it apart is its unique neon or electric coloration, often described as “electric” or “neon” due to its intense saturation and vibrant glow. This distinct coloration is attributed to the presence of trace amounts of copper and manganese within the crystal structure.

Due to its rarity and popularity, Paraiba Tourmaline is often considered a prized addition to fine jewelry collections and is highly valued for its beauty, uniqueness, and investment potential.

However, it's essential to ensure the authenticity of Paraiba Tourmaline, as synthetic and treated versions are sometimes encountered in the market.

Genuine Paraiba Tourmaline is certified and authenticated by reputable gemological laboratories to guarantee its authenticity and value.

Paraiba Tourmaline is primarily found in specific geological formations in Brazil, particularly in the state of Paraíba, which is where it gets its name from. The exact geological processes that led to the formation of Paraiba Tourmaline are complex and involve the interaction of various elements and conditions over millions of years.

Paraiba Tourmaline is highly valued and sought after for its stunning beauty, rarity, and unique coloration.

It is primarily used in jewelry, where its vibrant hues and exceptional brilliance make it a popular choice for high-end pieces.

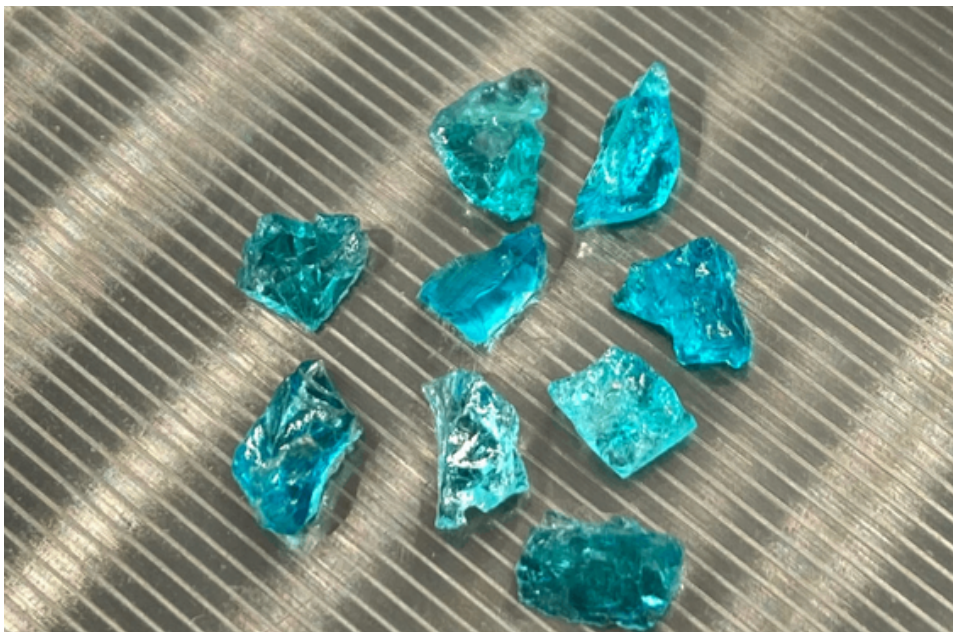
Some common uses of Paraiba Tourmaline include:

1. Gemstone Jewelry
2. Engagement Rings.
3. Collector's Items
4. Investment
5. Healing and Metaphysical Purposes

Overall, Paraiba Tourmaline's exceptional beauty, rarity, and versatility make it a prized gemstone in the world of jewelry and beyond. Whether adorning a stunning piece of jewelry, adding to a gemstone collection, or serving as an investment asset, Paraiba Tourmaline continues to captivate and inspire enthusiasts and collectors worldwide.

The interplay of copper and manganese impurities within the crystal lattice of Paraiba Tourmaline produces its remarkable range of vivid and electrifying colors, ranging from vibrant blues and greens to striking violets and purples. The precise combination and concentration of these impurities determine the gemstone's unique coloration, making each Paraiba Tourmaline a singular and captivating treasure.

Read the entire article at [GeologyScience.com](https://www.geology-science.com)



**! DANGER**

**ROCKS  
AHEAD**



**Cut at Your Own Risk**

Most minerals are safe to handle normally. However, lapidaries should exercise caution when cutting potentially toxic materials. Inhalation or accidental ingestion of rock particles could be detrimental to your health.

At the Withlacoochee Rockhounds meeting on  
Wednesday, March 13th, 2024,

Janice Wojcik will present a talk on the health hazards of cutting, grinding and polishing rocks with important information on how to make your lapidary work a lot safer!



# William Holland School of Lapidary Arts Scholarships 2024

Our club will be awarding two scholarships to worthy members in 2024. The winners will have their tuition paid for the 1-week class of their choice. This will include lodging and meals.

It will not include transportation to and from the location in Young Harris, Ga., nor will it include Lab fees and expenses for participating in the class. But you will receive a week-long, immersive experience in the craft of your choice and make wonderful memories to cherish forever!

The school opens April 1st and continues until the end of October.

If you're interested, and have been an active club member for at least 2 years, fill out an application at the March meeting and turn it in right away to any Board member.

The Board will be making a decision as soon as possible to give everyone plenty of time to choose their class.

The applications, along with the list of requirements and parameters, will be available at the front table by the door.

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## Central Florida Mineral & Gem Society, Inc Rock, Mineral, Gem, Jewelry & Fossil Show

Our friends at the Central Florida Mineral & Gem Society are having their annual gem show in April. Below is the information they provided.

Central Florida Mineral & Gem Society, Inc., a non-profit 501(C)3 educational organization is hosting a Rock, Mineral, Gem, Jewelry & Fossil Show on April 27th and 28th, 2024 at the City of Sanford Civic Center, 401 E. Seminole Blvd., Sanford, FL 32771.

Show time: Saturday 9am to 5pm and Sunday 9am to 4pm.

Vendors offering rocks, minerals, gemstones, fossils, beads, jewelry, artifacts, metaphysical stones, handcrafted cabochons, etc.

Silent auction, door prizes, demonstrations and family activities.

Admission fee: Adults \$6, Kids \$3 and Scouts in uniform free.

Website: [www.cfmgs.org](http://www.cfmgs.org).

Contact: President Salvatore Sansone 321-278-9294 or e-mail: [ssfossilhunter@aol.com](mailto:ssfossilhunter@aol.com).

If you have any questions, please e-mail or call me at 407-761-0622. Thank you.  
Betty Sumner, Secretary of Central Florida Mineral & Gem Society, Inc.

# Galaxyite (Galaxite) Stone

Galaxyite stone is a unique mineral material known for its striking appearance and composition. Composed primarily of a type of feldspar called labradorite, Galaxyite is characterized by its iridescent flashes of color, which give it a mesmerizing, almost cosmic appearance reminiscent of the night sky. The composition of Galaxyite includes a combination of minerals, with labradorite being the predominant one. Labradorite is a type of feldspar mineral belonging to the plagioclase series. It typically exhibits a play of colors known as labradorescence, caused by light interference within the mineral structure. This play of colors can manifest as flashes of blue, green, yellow, orange, and sometimes even purple. In addition to labradorite, Galaxyite may also contain other minerals such as calcite, quartz, and various trace elements. These additional components contribute to the stone's overall appearance and can influence its coloration and texture.



Galaxyite is often used in jewelry making, lapidary art, and ornamental purposes due to its unique visual appeal. It is frequently crafted into cabochons, beads, and other polished forms to showcase its stunning iridescence. Additionally, some people believe Galaxyite possesses metaphysical properties, such as promoting intuition, enhancing creativity, and fostering spiritual growth, although these claims are not scientifically proven.

Overall, Galaxyite stone stands out for its captivating beauty, making it a sought-after material for both aesthetic and spiritual purposes.

Galaxyite stone, primarily composed of labradorite, is found in various locations around the world where suitable geological conditions exist for its formation.

Labradorite itself is a common mineral in igneous rocks, particularly in those of intermediate composition such as basalt and gabbro.

Here are some notable occurrences and distributions of Galaxyite:

1. Canada:
2. Madagascar
3. Russia
4. Finland
5. Norway:

Read the entire article at [GeologyScience.com](https://www.geology-science.com)

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## Field Trips

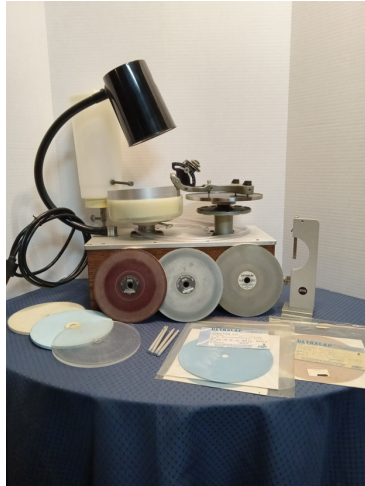
**"Note: The Withlacoochee Rockhounds Club does not sponsor field trips other than trips that are sanctioned by the SFMS (The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies).**

**Our club insurance is through SFMS and does not cover excursions not listed on their website as safe."**

Some items for sale by club members.  
All items are local pick up only. No shipping.



Melodye has a new, in-box  
Hi-Tech 6" rock trim saw  
for sale.  
**\$400**  
407.760.4472



Melodye has a lovingly  
restored RayTech  
faceting machine for  
sale.  
Works great.  
**\$900**  
(These normally sell for upwards  
of \$3000)  
407.760.4472



Michelle has some marble  
for sale.  
**\$25 for all the pieces.**

**Withlacoochee Rockhounds**

Our monthly club meeting is held at the  
Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Club,  
3357 Susan Dr., Spring Hill, FL 34606, on  
the 2nd Wednesday of each month  
from 7:00 to 9:00 PM



[www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com](http://www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com)

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Contact Michael Steverson to set up an  
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Please help us find advertisers for the  
*Rock Talk* and our website. The club can  
use the monthly income. Both the *Rock  
Talk* and our website have more exposure  
than only club members

Contact club treasurer, Janet Wheeler: [ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com)  
or send to:  
Withlacoochee Rockhounds  
PO Box 5634  
Spring Hill, FL 34811-6634

**Withlacoochee Rockhounds**

Purpose  
We are a non-profit organization whose purpose is to foster interest and promote knowledge of minerals, gems, fossils, lapidary arts, and earth sciences, through regular meetings, informative programs, and workshops. PLUS, our annual gem, mineral and jewelry show.  
Membership is open to anyone sharing such interests.

Dues  
Dues are \$35.00 annually for adults, and \$5.00 for children under 18 years of age.

Club Meeting Location and Time  
Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center, 3375 Susan Dr in Spring Hill. Meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00PM

**2024 Club Officers and Appointees**

President	Anthony Maffatone	352.397.7694	<a href="mailto:anthonymaffatone@gmail.com">anthonymaffatone@gmail.com</a>
Vice President	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	<a href="mailto:highlander56@gmail.com">highlander56@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Melodye Steverson	352.683.9496	<a href="mailto:melodye@designsbymelodye.com">melodye@designsbymelodye.com</a>
Treasurer	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	<a href="mailto:ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com">ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com</a>
Rock Talk Editor	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	<a href="mailto:highlander56@gmail.com">highlander56@gmail.com</a>
Club Webmaster	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	<a href="mailto:highlander56@gmail.com">highlander56@gmail.com</a>
Mailing Reporter	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	<a href="mailto:ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com">ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com</a>
Audio/Visual Coordinator	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	<a href="mailto:highlander56@gmail.com">highlander56@gmail.com</a>

Anthony Maffatone (President)    Michael Steverson (Vice President)    Melodye Steverson (Secretary)    Janet Wheeler (Treasurer)  
 Hunter Mellring    Leslie Newberry    Roger Wheeler    James Roush (Appointed)    Ralph Barber (Past President)





## Bench Tips from Brad Smith

Brad Smith's *Bench Tips* are a monthly feature of Rock Talk

### COLORING EPOXY

There are two ways to add color when you are using epoxies.

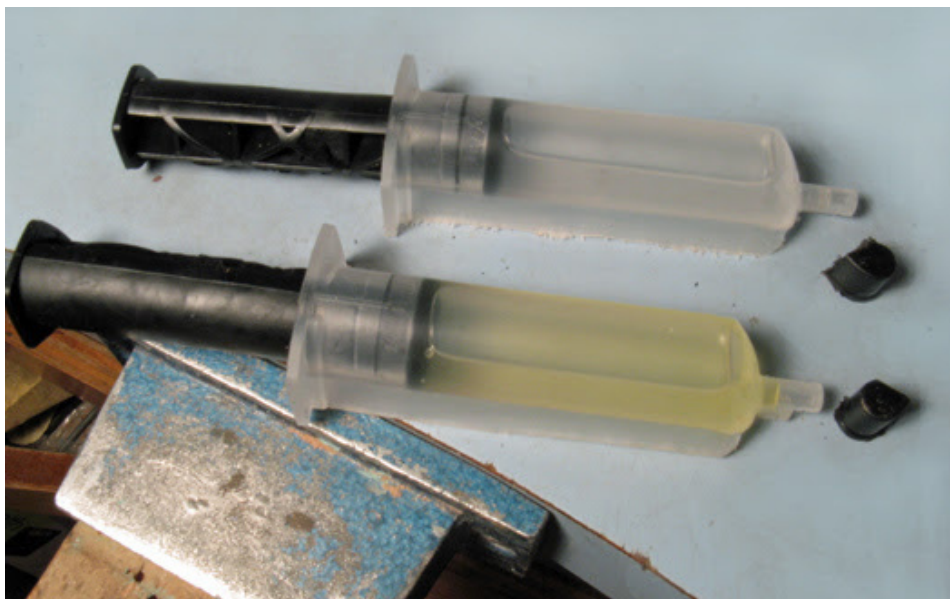
The first is to add a powdered material like colored chalk, charcoal, or powdered colors from an art supply store. One that I particularly like is a set of pastel glitter powders. A second way is to add a liquid pigment like nail polish, model airplane paint, or tinting pigments from a marine supplies store.

In preparing epoxy for use, the important things are to use exactly equal parts of the two components and to thoroughly mix them together.

Coloring material can be added at any time. If I'm making just a small amount, I squeeze out equal-sized droplets onto a piece of scrap paper or aluminum foil and mix thoroughly with a toothpick.

To mix larger amounts of epoxy, I use a gram scale to weigh the first component. Then I zero the scale and weigh out the same amount of the second component, add coloring if needed, and mix.

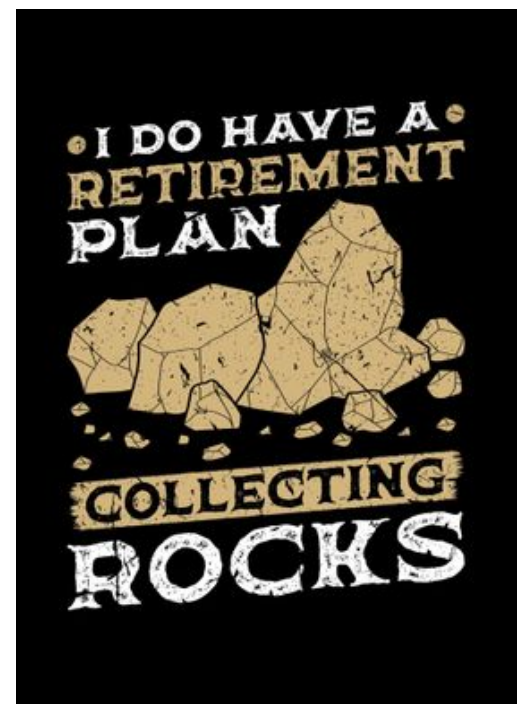
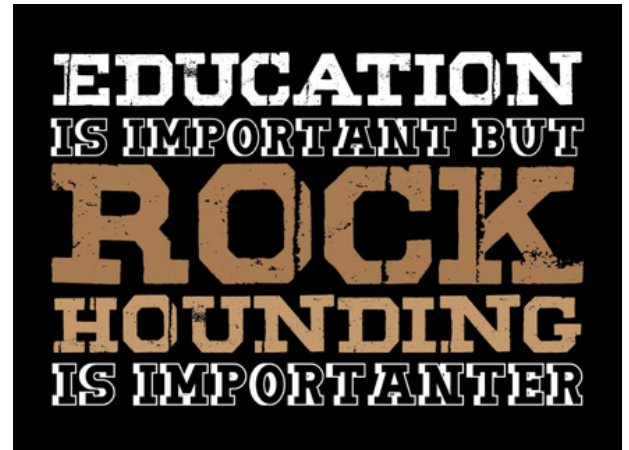
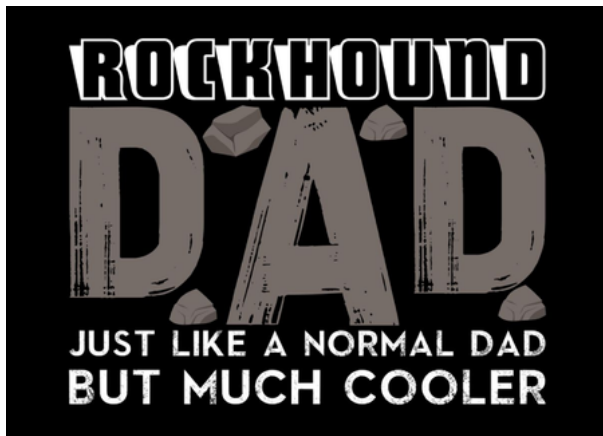
If you are using 5-minute epoxy, the mixing needs to move quickly. But, I like to work carefully when adding color. So I squeeze out equal-sized droplets side by side on the scrap paper. Then I work with just one of the droplets to add the colors. The 5-minute clock only starts when you mix in the second droplet.

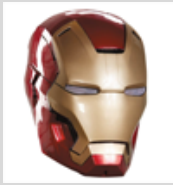


Learn New Skills with Brad's "How To Do It" Books  
[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)



# Rock Talk Funny Papers





## From The Editor

### Hello to all Withlacoochee Rockhounds

It is I, your friendly neighborhood editor again.

Our February meeting was fun. Yours truly brought in some videos about Amethyst mining in South Carolina. The number of "OMG's" I heard from our members about the stones being recovered in the videos was something! Well, they WERE some really big stones!

For our March meeting, club member Janice Wojcik will be covering rocks that could be dangerous if you do not take proper precautions when cutting and polishing. Things like the dust they give off, etc.

Also, membership for the new year is due. If you have not renewed your club membership, please do so. You can renew at the meeting (we take cash, checks, and credit cards), or mail your renewal application in. The revised application is at the end of this newsletter.

If you would like to place a business card ad in the newsletter, please feel free to contact me, and we'll get you added to the next available issue.

Additionally, if any of you have not received your newsletter or are not receiving my e-mail blasts (meetings, rock sales, etc.), *please* check your spam folder. If you are still are not receiving them, please contact me, and let's make sure I have your correct e-mail address. I have a few of you who unsubscribed from the mailings. I cannot add you back to the list. You have to subscribe to get back on the list. It's a permissions thing.

Our Board would like our members to come up with suggestions for programs to be presented at our monthly meetings. What would you like to see? What would you like to learn? What would you like to know? Is there something you'd like to teach or present? You can help our club expand its educational repertoire. We'd love to hear from you all.

Contact any Board member or bring your written suggestions to a meeting.

Rock On!!!

Club Phone Number - 352.587.2714

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### Warning to Withlacoochee Rockhound Members

*During the last several months, illicit requests have been sent to members of various clubs in the US, including the Withlacoochee Rockhounds, asking members to purchase gift cards that would be used as donations to various organizations.*

*These are SCAMS.*


*Be advised that our club has never and will never ask members to buy gift cards or provide any form of monetary funds to anyone or any organization by phone call, email, or any other method of communication.*

# Rockhounds Advertisers

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**Your Business Card Size Ad in Rock Talk**

The cost for non-club members to advertise their businesses in  
Rock Talk is \$10.00 per month.

Contact Michael Stevenson to set up an ad in both the newsletter and  
the club website. It will benefit both  
your business and our club.

If your ad has a web address, or Etsy shop address, I have linked to it.

**Advertisers Are Needed**

Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website.  
The monthly income from these ads is beneficial to the club.  
Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members.  
Contact club treasurer Janet Wheeler: [ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com) or  
send to:  
Withlacoochee Rockhounds  
PO Box 5634 Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634





# Membership Form – 2024

Withlacoochee Rockhounds  
Hernando County FL

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Full Name

Partner's Full Name

\* If both applying for membership

Child's Full Name

\* If under 18, and applying with parent

Street Address

City

State / ZIP

Phone Number

Email

## Annual Membership Dues:

\*Choose your type of membership

Individual Membership \$35.00/ea

Individual Membership \$35.00/ea

Under 18 Membership \$5.00/ea

Under 18 Membership \$5.00/ea

Returning Member?

New Member?

If you are applying, for example, as husband, wife and child (under 18), then fill in full name, partner's name and child's name above. Then, choose two individual memberships to the left, along with an under 18 membership.

Give this completed form, along with your check (made payable to "Withlacoochee Rockhounds") or credit card for dues to Club Secretary Janet Wheeler at a club meeting. Or, you may mail the form to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds  
PO Box  
Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634